

N. Amer. 1752

The Grenfell Association

For aiding philanthropic
work among

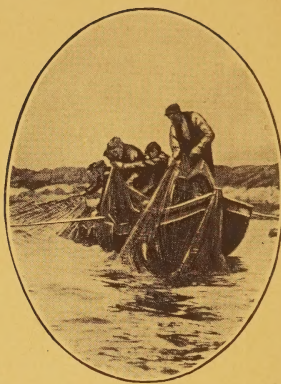
The Deep Sea Fishermen of Labrador

Henry van Dyke, President



With best wishes

Wilfred Grenfell



Trap-Boat Fishermen



Battle Harbor Hospital



Off For The Doctor

THE GRENFELL ASSOCIATION

for aiding
philanthropic work among

The Deep Sea Fishermen of Labrador

The following excerpts from various publications have been selected with the purpose of stating in a concise and authoritative form the facts concerning the origin, spirit and object of the work which Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell is doing in Labrador, and which this association is aiding.

A BIT OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

By Wilfred T. Grenfell.

In 1883, while I was studying medicine at the London Hospital in Whitechapel, I was attracted by a huge crowd going into a large tent in the slums of Stepney. There was singing going on inside, and curiosity led me in.

As I left with the crowd, I came to the conclusion that my religious life was a humbug. I vowed in future that I would either give it up or make it real. It was obviously not a thing to be played with.* * *

Some time later I heard that one of England's famous cricketers, whose athletic distinctions I greatly admired, Mr. J. E. K. Studd, was going to speak in the neighborhood, and I went to hear him. Seated in front of me there were two or three rows of boys from a training-ship, all dressed in the same uniform. At the end of his speech Mr. Studd invited any one who was not ashamed to confess that Christ was his Master for this life, rather than a kind of insurance ticket for the next world, to stand up. I was both ashamed and surprised to find that I was afraid to stand up. I did not know I was afraid of anything. One boy out of all this large number rose to his feet. I knew pretty well what that meant for him, so I decided to back him up and do the same.

With this theological outfit, I started on my missionary career. What to do was the next question. I went to the parson of a church where I occasionally attended, and offered myself for a class of boys in his Sunday-school. They were downright East Londoners, and their spiritual education needed other capacities than those I had, in my mind, till then endowed the Sunday-school teacher with. I remember being surprised that one boy, whom I carried to the door by the seat of his trousers and heaved into the street, objected by endeavoring to kick, while his "pals" in the school were for joining him in open mutiny. He got the last word, however, by climbing up outside the window and waving a hymn-book which he had stolen.

The next time I arrived the boys had got in before me (and out also), and the pictures and furniture were not as I had left them. I started to reform them in the ways that appealed most to myself, and, having a house of our own, with four other medical students, we used to clear our dining-room furniture through the window, and replace it with a horizontal bar and a couple of pairs of boxing gloves. We were able to lead in these things our noisiest boys, and they learned to control their own tempers and respect our capacities more.* * *

My medical course being finished, I began to cast about for some way in which I could satisfy the aspirations of a young medical man and combine it with a desire for adventure and definite Christian work. Sir Frederick Treves, the famous surgeon, also a daring sailor and master mariner, who had twice helped us at our camp, and for whom I had been doing the work of an "interne" at the London Hospital, suggested my seeing if a doctor could live at sea among the deep-sea fishermen on one of the vessels of the Society for which he was a member of the council.* * *

Encouraged by results in 1892, I was loaned the largest of the sailing vessels, a craft of ninety-seven tons burden, in which we sailed to the Labrador coast

to see whether among English-speaking fishermen of the Northwest Atlantic similar results might not be achieved.

In three months we had nine hundred patients, to whom we could thus commend our Gospel with pills and plasters, without fear of denominational interference, besides witnessing a condition of poverty to which we had been quite strangers over on the other side. Unable to do on the ship to those men as we would have them do unto us under similar circumstances, we called on the way home at St. John's, Newfoundland, and laid the matter before the merchants, asking for help to build a hospital on the land, and promising to bring out a doctor and nurse to live there if they built it.

We have now three hospitals on that desolate coast—not palaces for pain such as one sees in these great cities, but humble wood buildings where a qualified doctor and trained nurse reside, where besides their own rooms they have a dozen beds for sick people, a convalescent room, an operating room, and an isolation ward. These places are not only hospitals but hotels, places to which any one and every one is expected to come in sickness or any other kind of trouble whatever. Needless to say, they come often very long distances in their boats in summer, or in dog-sleighs in winter. We do our part in the summer cruising in the hospital ships, the largest of which I serve as captain, and in winter by traveling from place to place—moving practically all the time, only making the hospital, which is kept open by the nurse, the headquarters to which we return whenever we think it necessary.

Here other methods of commending our Gospel are also open to us, owing to the extraordinary poverty and isolation of the people. Lack of experience made us satisfied for the first three years to try and cope with the question of hunger and nakedness, by collecting and distributing warm clothing, and assisting the people in various ways to get food.

It was not until 1896 that, seeing the futility of giving financial help to men who had to pay from \$7 to \$8 for a barrel of flour worth \$4, and \$2.50 to \$3 for a hogshead of salt which could be bought at St. John's for \$1, we set to work to find a new sermon to preach on this subject. Many of our most piteous cases at hospital were the direct fruit of chronic semi-starvation. Thus our people fell victims to tuberculosis of glands and bones, owing only to the marasmus induced by insufficient food. This was more especially the case among children. A universal system of truck business prevailed: the "catch" of tomorrow was mortgaged for the food of to-day. The people seldom or never saw cash. The inevitable results were poverty, thriftlessness, and eventually hopelessness. The contention of the trader was always that the men's poverty was because they did not catch enough to support themselves. The answer was that they got enough to support at least thirty traders.

We started a sermon with a co-operative store as a text. The people round it were all heavily in debt; most winters they received so much government relief to keep them from actual starvation that the place was known as "The Sink." The people were almost all illiterate and knew nothing about business, and the little store went through varying fortunes. They had very, very little money to put in, and even that they were afraid to put in under their own names, for fear the traders should find out and punish them. One trader wrote me denying our right to interfere with his people, as if those whom he had tried to lead me to think were only the recipients of his "charity" existed solely for the benefit of his trade. I need not say that we had now to regret gaps in the prayer-meetings once filled so fervently by our friends the enemy.

Looking at the results of the sermon seven years afterwards, I find the people clothed, fed, independent, with a new little church building, and children far-and-away better clad and educated. The movement has spread; there are now five co-operative stores,

with a schooner called the "Co-operator" which carries their products to and from the markets. The price of flour has uniformly kept under \$5 a barrel; the price of salt has been reduced nearly 50 per cent., and other things in proportion. We have had many troubles, owing to poor fisheries, our own ignorance of methods of business, and to our isolation. But our storekeepers and crew are Christian men, well aware that the best Gospel they can preach is to keep the store for Christ. As a contrast, I sent down a young friend from Boston, who had once been a preacher on the coast, giving him \$100 for his holiday to stay at this first store and "teach them how to manage a co-operative store." He was some three days at the store himself, seeing "nothing to do." The rest he spent preaching along the coast. The consequence was the store suffered very materially, for I was home next year, and the people, afraid to handle their money, left the whole of their capital in the bank. I don't know that the memory of his sermons is a justification for his view of what was "most important" to the kingdom of God on the coast.

One of our chief troubles with our people was the long enforced idleness of the winter and the consequent necessity of living largely on the summer "catch." This necessitated their remaining scattered on the chance of catching fur-bearing animals in the winter, even if the actual "catch," as was often the case, didn't amount to a barrel of flour for the whole time. This again prevented their children being reached for educational purposes. It was long a problem to us what ought to be done to meet the difficulty. Eventually, we took up a grant of timberland on which the Newfoundland Government permitted me special conditions, and we started to aggregate the people in winter by affording them remunerative work about the mill. To this we have added a small schooner-building yard, and hope shortly to add a cooperage, as we use many barrels in the fish industry. We have gathered together about this small effort this winter some

two hundred and fifty people. A small school-house has been erected, and those who are managing the mill know that this effort is their text from which they are to preach their sermon.

There can be no question that the Christ would today support all manly and innocent pastimes. So, to meet the needs of the long wintry evenings, we have commandeered the two small jails in our district and converted them into clubs, with a library and games, which have been supplemented by the importation of footballs made of rubber for service on the snow. This has become so popular that our Eskimo women join the game with their babies in their hoods, and seal-skin footballs stuffed with dry grass have sprung into existence all along the coast.

The toys which we usually credit Santa Claus with bringing from the north had hitherto been conspicuous by their absence, the supply perhaps being exhausted. Anyhow, the birthdays of the Labrador children, like the birthday of our Lord, have never been characterized by the joyful celebrations which formed oases in our own child life. We have turned the current of toys back to the north again. True, the dolls are often legless, the tops are dented, and the Noah's arks resemble hospitals. But these trifles have made the Christmas tree no less a message of the love of God on the birthday of the Saviour to these many birthdayless children who thus keep their own on that day.

We have become residuary legatees for all the real estate in the orphan children line. Some years ago I buried a young Scotch fisherman and his wife in a desolate sand-pit of land running out into one of the long fjords of Labrador. Amidst the poverty-stricken group that stood by as the snow fell were five little orphan children. Having assumed the care of all of them, I advertised two in a Boston newspaper and received an application from a farmer's wife in New Hampshire. Later on I visited the farm; it was small and poor and away in the backwoods. The

woman had children of her own. Her simple explanation as to why she took the children is worth recording: "I cannot teach in the Sunday-school or attend prayer-meetings, Doctor. They are too far away, and I wanted to do something for the Master. I thought the farm would feed two more children." I was glad she could not speak at the prayer-meetings. Perhaps, after all, we grade our Christians by a wrong standard.

How many are losing the chances of preaching sermons that need no oratory? Is it one of the causes of the failures of the churches that so much undeveloped capacity remains in the pews?

In what relation would the Christ stand to-day to wrong-doing? On our wild and almost uncharted coast, where the visits of strangers are very rare, many wrecks occurred that, to say the least, suggested to the underwriters that no illegal efforts had been made to save them. We were asked by Lloyds' Underwriting Agency to act as agents for them and furnish reports in case of losses occurring. At first we declined, fearing that the kind of espionage which would be necessary would be likely to interfere with our "spiritual" work. Later we began to think it was not necessary to knock all the spirit out of men to make them "spiritual," so we accepted the post of Magistrate for the coast, and also Lloyds' agency.

Steaming down a long fjord late in October, we picked up the crew of a small steamer wrecked on the north shore. After landing the men for the last boat south to take them home, we returned and raised the steamer—hailed her keel out of the water at low tide, and found the only damage was a hole driven with a crowbar in her bottom. In endeavoring to tow her some six hundred miles south to St. John's, Newfoundland, we lost her in a gale of wind at sea, and with her our evidence of the crime.

It did not take us long to find out that this blow at unrighteousness had made us more enemies than many sermons. We have a saying that "it is only when you really tread on the devil's tail that he will

wag it"—perhaps a modern synonym for "no cross, no crown." So long as the battle with sin is fought with kid gloves on, there will never be any need of the "fellowship of suffering." Last season, after every one had left the coast, report that a large vessel loaded with fish and fully insured had been lost on the rocks six hundred miles north, reached St. John's. Owing to the rapidly forming ice, we were doubtful if it was possible to get at the ship. But fortune favored us; we were able to get her, raise her, and, almost to our own surprise, we were able to tow her, in spite of December gales, safely to St. John's Harbor. The consignee (the same man who had owned the steamer we lost, and who had "suffered other losses") was found guilty of barratry and sent down to penal servitude. It is said that the world consists of two kinds of people, "those who go out and try to do something" and those who "stay home and wonder why they don't do it some other way." How would the critic look at this? Was it "missionary"? * * * Is not the real problem of Christianity how best to commend it to the world? Can it most truly be advocated by word or deed? Can we afford to divorce the "secular" from the "religious," any more than the "religious" from the "secular"? It seems to me there is only one way to reach the soul—that is, through the body. For when the soul has cast off the body we cannot reach it at all.

From The Outlook, July 18th, 1903

Interesting descriptions of Dr. Grenfell's work are given in *Harper's Magazine* for December, 1904; *McClure's Magazine* for April, 1905; *The Harvest of the Sea, Vikings of To-Day, Off the Rocks*, by W. T. Grenfell; *Dr. Grenfell's Parish*, by Norman Duncan; *Putnam's Monthly* December, 1906. *Among the Deep Sea Fishers*, a quarterly magazine, is devoted entirely to the interest of the work. Subscriptions (50c. per year), may be sent to the Secretary of the Grenfell Association.

AN OUTLINE HISTORY.

- 1892—The hospital vessel *Albert* sailed from England with Dr. Grenfell in charge as the only Mission doctor. He spent three months on the coast, holding services and treating 900 sick folk.
- 1893—Battle Harbor Hospital was presented by friends in St. John's, Newfoundland, and opened during the summer under a qualified nurse and doctor. The launch *Princess May* was added to enable the ship to do more work.
- 1894—Indian Harbor Hospital was opened for the summer, and for the first time Battle Harbor Hospital was kept open in winter. Friends in Canada began to help the Mission.
- 1895—The sailing hospital was replaced by the steamer *Sir Donald*, the gift of Sir Donald A. Smith, who has lived many years in Labrador. 1,900 sick folk received treatment. Dr. Roddick, of Montreal, presented the sailing boat *Urelia McKinnon* to the Mission.
- 1896—A small co-operative store was started at Red Bay, in the Straits of Belle Isle, to help the settlers to escape the "truck system" of trade and the consequent loss of independence and thrift. This has since spread to a series of five, with very beneficial results to the very poorest. The *Sir Donald* was carried out from her harbor by the winter ice, and found far at sea, still frozen in, by the seal hunters. She had to be sold.
- 1897—The steam launch *Julian Sheridan*, given by a Toronto lady, replaced the *Sir Donald*. A large mission hall was attached to Indian Harbor Hospital for the use of the fishermen. 2,000 patients were treated.
- 1899—Largely through the munificence of the High Commissioner, the steel steam hospital *Strathcona* was built at Dartmouth, England, and fitted with every available modern appliance. At the request of the settlers, a doctor wintered in North Newfoundland.
- 1900—The *Strathcona* steamed out to Labrador. The settlers on the Newfoundland shore of the Straits

of Belle Isle commenced a hospital at St. Anthony, and the Mission decided to adopt that place as a third station.

- 1901.—The Newfoundland Government granted \$1,500 to stimulate the erection of St. Anthony Hospital. A small co-operative lumber mill was started to help the settlers of the poorest district, who often faced semi-starvation, to get remunerative work in winter. The schooner *Co-operator* was purchased and rebuilt by the people to assist the co-operative store efforts.
- 1902.—A new wing was added to Battle Harbor Hospital, with a fine convalescent room and a new operating room. Indian Harbor Hospital was also considerably enlarged. 2,774 patients received treatment—110 of these being in-patients in the little hospitals. The launch *Julia Sheridan* was chartered by the government, with one of the medical officers, to suppress an outbreak of smallpox.
- 1903.—Some new outbuildings were added to the Indian Harbor Hospital, and a mortuary and store were built at Battle Harbor Hospital. The third and fourth co-operative stores were started at West St. Modiste and at Flowers Cove to encourage cash dealing and thrift. The *Princess May* went out of commission and was sold.
- 1904.—A new doctor's house was built at Battle Harbor. The steam launch *Julia Sheridan* had to be sold. She was replaced by a 10 H. P. kerosene launch called by the same name. An orphanage was built at St. Anthony's Hospital to accommodate fifteen children. A building was also added for teaching loom work and general carpentering and lathe work.
- 1905.—A doctor was appointed at the request of the people on the Canadian Labrador, with headquarters at Harrington, near Cape Whittle, on the north side of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The first schooners were built at the lumber mills, which is now flourishing, and helping to maintain some one

hundred families. Two consulting surgeons from Boston Universities visited us during the summer to help in the work. Through the generosity of Mr. Andrew Carnegie, between thirty and forty small portable libraries were distributed along the coast, containing from 50 to 100 books in each.

1906—Through the help of friends in Montreal and Toronto a new hospital and doctor's house were built at Harrington, and a second kerosene launch called the *Northern Messenger* was given for the work there. New dog sledges and teams were also given by the *Montreal Weekly Witness*. Some new buildings were erected at St. Anthony, including some small farm outbuildings, and some land taken up from the Newfoundland Government with a view to trying to introduce cattle.

1906-07—In connection with the co-operative store at Flowers Cove an industry of making seal skin boots has sprung up, and 1,500 pair of boots were exported this summer. Around these small industries it is possible to aggregate women and children in the winter for the purpose of better education. A new wharf, with stores for clothing, coal, and a large mission room are being added to Battle Harbor. The old Executive Building will have to come down in 1907, as the accommodation is now altogether inadequate for the work that has to be done. It is hoped also this year that funds will be raised to commence the introduction of the domestic reindeer, to afford meat, milk, and better transportation. Several volunteers have joined the staff:—the lady in charge of the orphanage, an electrical engineer in charge of the general mechanical work, a teacher for night school and library work; while the fourth hospital was kept open all last summer by a volunteer doctor from Harvard University and volunteer nurses from England. A volunteer teacher of arts and crafts will be in charge of the industrial work at St. Anthony this year.

FROM HENRY VAN DYKE.

People often ask nowadays whether the world is growing better or not. If I wanted to find a demonstration of the fact that the world is growing better, I should ask you to compare the modern Viking with his ancestors, the old Vikings. If they had come to visit New York to-night, it would not be in a peaceful assembly like this that we should receive them. They would have come with fire and sword to harry our coasts, to plunder our houses, and to carry off our young women. That is the way the old Vikings did, but the Viking of to-day—a descendant of those same old chaps who set sail in their galleys from the viks or creeks of Norway and Sweden—the modern Viking, when he gets into his boat, goes to explore strange coasts also, but not to carry death and destruction; he goes forth to carry life, healing, health, and brotherhood. We have come to-night to listen to the story of a man—an Oxford man, Doctor of Medicine * * * He set out in the world to find two things, first a chance for fine adventure, and second, an opportunity to practice the religion of Jesus Christ, and he found them both on the wild coast of Labrador,—away up there where the very summer is almost like winter, and where the winter is a male adult winter without any mistake. Up there on that wild, rock-bound, and yet strangely fascinating coast, he found a class of human beings, “liveyeres,” as they call them, and fishermen visiting the coast from year to year, * * * who are needing that very kind of help and brotherhood which he could bring to them. For fourteen years, he has spent his life with that people, * * * giving himself as a man to their service, * * * building his hospitals, * * * opening his co-operative stores to save the people from the grasp of greed and avarice that is crushing the life out of them, * * * ministering to them in the higher life as well as in the physical life, and he says he has had “bully good fun” while he has been doing it.—*From a speech at Carnegie Hall, New York, 15 Jan., 1907.*

FROM NORMAN DUNCAN.

When Dr. Grenfell first appeared on the coast, I am told, the folk thought him a madman of some benign description. He knew nothing of the reefs, the tides, the currents, cared nothing, apparently, for the winds, and sailed with the confidence and reckless courage of a Labrador skipper. Fearing at times to trust his schooner in unknown waters, he went about in a whale-boat, and so hard did he drive her that he wore her out in a single season. She was capsized with all hands, once driven out to sea, many times nearly swamped, once blown on the rocks; never before was a boat put to such tasks on that coast, and at the end of it she was wrecked beyond repair. Next season he appeared with a little steam-launch, the *Princess May*—her beam was eight feet!—in which he not only journeyed from St. John's to Labrador, to the astonishment of the whole colony, but sailed the length of that bitter coast, passing into the gulf and safely out again, and pushing to the very farthest settlements in the north. Late in the fall, upon the return journey to St. John's in stormy weather, she was reported lost, and many a skipper, I suppose, wondered that she had lived so long; but she weathered a gale that bothered the mail-boat, and triumphantly made St. John's, after as adventurous a voyage, no doubt, as ever a boat of her measure survived.

"Sure," said a skipper, "I don't know how she done it. The Lord," he added, piously, "must kape an eye on that man."

There is a new proverb on the coast. The folk say, when a great wind blows "This'll bring Grenfell!"

From "Dr. Grenfell's Parish."

FROM THE OUTLOOK.

For the first time, so far as we know, the King of England has given one of the "Birthday Honors" to a man as a reward for heroic missionary work. It is true that the man could hardly be regarded as a conventional missionary; for Dr. Grenfell, who is now a Companion of St.

Michael and St. George, fills many offices on the Labrador coast. * * *

* * * He is surgeon, master-mariner, a magistrate, an agent of the Lloyds in running down rascals who wreck their vessels for the insurance, a manager of a string of co-operative stores, a general opponent of all fraud and oppression. * * * He can amputate a leg, contract the walls of a pleuritic lung by shortening the ribs, or cure, by the use of modern methods but with home-made appliances, a man suffering from a certain form of paralysis of the lower limbs; a hundred and fifty miles from the ship yard he can raise the stern of his little iron steamer out of the water by the rough application of the principles of hydraulics, and repair her propeller; he can handle dynamite, and blast out an excavation under one of his simple hospital buildings in which to place a heating apparatus; he can start a lumber-mill and teach the starving inhabitants of lonely Labrador not only how to handle a saw, but how to sell the product for a living wage; he can establish co-operative stores, and, what is better, make them pay, so that those fishermen who have practically been slaves to unscrupulous traders, never seeing the smallest piece of silver from one year's end to another, can accumulate their little savings in cash; and he has a "muscular Christianity" that enables him to knock down and drag out the human beast that comes into Labrador to add the illicit whisky-bottle to the other sources of the suffering which the inhabitants have to endure.

* * * He takes his new honor with a characteristic spirit, for he values it, not as a tribute to himself personally, but as a sanction which will give him power in his struggle with unscrupulous traders, heartless dealers in rum, and all sorts of malefactors who find on that coast easy prey and safe quarters. He is now planning to introduce reindeer into that country. These animals will furnish food, clothing, transportation in place of dog-teams, material for manufacture, and consequently new opportunities for industrial development for all the people.—*Compiled from editorial comment, 5 Jan. and 26 Jan., 1907.*

The Grenfell Association of New York

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On March 15th, 1905, a number of the friends of Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell, Superintendent of the Mission to the Deep Sea Fishermen of Labrador, united in forming The Grenfell Association to assist him in his work in Labrador and the northern peninsula of Newfoundland.

It is not the intention of the Grenfell Association to take the place of the support now furnished to Dr. Grenfell by the Home Society or by the other friends who have so generously contributed to his work in the past, but rather to supplement this by additional funds for the expansion and increased efficiency of the work.

If \$30,000 could be raised annually, it would enable Dr. Grenfell to maintain his work and extend it.

All those who desire to have a part in this work are requested:

(1) To join the Grenfell Association (dues \$2.00 annually).

(2) To spread information about and promote interest in the work.

(3) To contribute to its maintenance either by subscription or donation.

\$1,500 will endow a cot permanently.

\$1,000 will meet the annual expenses of a hospital launch.

\$100 will buy and transport a reindeer.

\$50 will support a cot for one year.

\$7 will provide a ton of coal for the steamer.

Gifts of clothing in good repair, blankets, books and magazines for loan libraries, medical supplies, toys for children, lantern slides for teaching, will also be welcomed, and may be addressed to Dr. W. T. Grenfell, 156 Fifth avenue, New York.

Subscriptions for the Association and membership dues should be sent to Mr. Eugene Delano, Treasurer, 59 Wall street, New York; all other communications to Mr. Willis E. Lougee, Secretary, Room 415, 156 Fifth avenue, New York.

New England Grenfell Association

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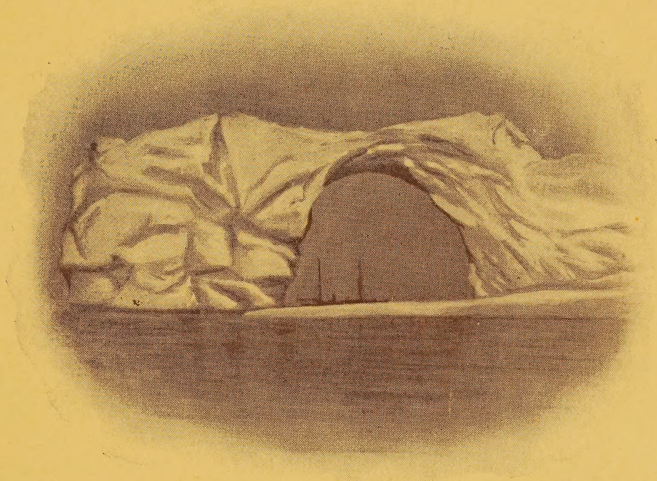
The funds raised by the New England Grenfell Association are transmitted to Labrador through Messrs. Brown Brothers & Company.

The Grenfell Association of America

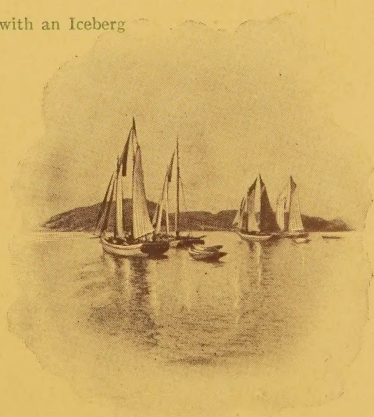
The Grenfell Association of New York and the New England Grenfell Association are co-operating to organize and incorporate a National body under the name of the Grenfell Association of America. Those friends and supporters of Dr. Grenfell who are already organized into local associations or committees will, it is expected, become affiliated with this general association, and thereby aid him more effectively; those who are not so organized can form such local associations or committee much more advantageously with the aid of the general association. Further information may be obtained from the Secretary.



Rapid Transit in Labrador



The Strathcona in Company with an Iceberg



A Fisher Fleet



The Hospital Ship Strathcona